

PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Job Overview

The Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska is seeking applicants from qualified individuals for the position of Public Outreach Communications Specialist. The position reports to the Director of Communications and Marketing and will play an important role in helping build public support for high-quality early childhood care and education in Nebraska and beyond. This individual will assist with the development and execution of public outreach and education initiatives, communications research, media relations, partner and agency liaison, special events, and project coordination. This position requires the ability to work in a fast-paced environment, managing multiple priorities and working well under pressure with strict deadlines and the ability to juggle tasks in a busy, deadline-oriented environment.

The Buffett Institute serves as a bridge to resources and information for parents, providers, and the public. One of the four areas of focus at the Institute is outreach in order to communicate what we know to improve the lives of vulnerable young children and their families. The communications unit plays a critical role in this function, and this position will help the Institute realize its vision of making Nebraska the best place in the nation to be a baby.

Buffett Early Childhood Institute Profile

Envisioned as a new model for how public higher education is engaged in the first years of life, the Buffett Early Childhood Institute (<https://buffettinstitute.nebraska.edu/>) is a four-campus, university-wide, multidisciplinary research, education, outreach, and policy institute of the University of Nebraska committed to helping transform early childhood development and education in Nebraska and across the nation. The long-term goal of the Institute is to be a leading center where scholars, practitioners, community members, and policymakers collaborate to advance a unified approach that can improve the lives of young children and families and the systems that support them.

Applicants should note that the goals of the Institute are university-, state-, and nation-wide, but the location of the Institute administration office is in Omaha. The position will work primarily out of the Omaha office. Regular hours at the Institute and for this position are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with some evening and weekend assistance when events occur outside of normal work hours. This position may also require some travel.

Job Responsibilities

This job description is not to be considered an exhaustive or exclusive statement of duties, responsibilities, or requirements. Employees may be required to perform other job-related duties as requested. This list describes major responsibilities to support the Buffett Institute by aligning marketing and communication strategies to Institute goals.

Public Outreach and Education Initiatives (40%)

- Serve as strategist and project manager for all statewide public awareness campaigns, including the We Care for Kids campaign.
- Assist with the development of public outreach strategies and initiatives to build public support for high-quality early childhood care and education in Nebraska and beyond.
- Assist in managing an external speakers' bureau aligning early childhood partners and experts with outreach and education opportunities across the state; coordinate efforts with the Institute's senior events and outreach manager, who oversees speaking opportunities for Institute leadership and staff.
- Facilitate and support communications research projects, including identification and review of available communications research, message frames, surveys, and focus groups; audits of communications materials and programs; and other designated items.
- Support the Nebraska Early Childhood Partners Communicators' Roundtable and facilitate effective communications among communicators and other professional staff.
- Work with external agencies and contractors as required to fulfill public outreach and education initiatives.

Media Relations (35%)

- Under the direction of the Director of Communications, write and distribute media advisories and press releases.
- Respond to routine media inquiries pertaining to early childhood education and stories about Institute reports and publications, research findings and briefs, events, and other designated priorities.
- Work closely with the managing editor to identify additional outlets and opportunities for Institute-written stories.
- Assist with the development and execution of press kit materials.
- Strategically leverage the Institute's media software, Meltwater, to discover new opportunities and develop relationships with new local, state, and national media outlets.
- Track analytics for media outreach efforts.

Communications and Marketing Coordination (25%)

- Assist with the development of Institute publications, including writing and editing publications, press materials, and website copy in alignment with an editorial plan.
- Coordinate cross-functional teams and project manage public outreach materials from start to finish.
- Assist with the implementation of strategic communications plans and strategies to achieve the Institute's public outreach and education goals.
- Assist Events Manager with public outreach events as needed.
- Assume other responsibilities as defined by the Director of Communications.

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree
- Five years of professional experience in communications, journalism, marketing, or related fields
- Demonstrated success in managing and executing communications strategies
- Demonstrated media relations experience
- Excellent writing abilities
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively across an organization

Preferred Qualifications

- Seven years of progressive professional experience in communications, journalism, marketing, or related fields
- Previous experience coordinating local, state, and national media coverage for an educational organization, nonprofit, or issue-oriented organization
- Experience using media monitoring software
- Experience with shooting and editing photos/video
- Experience working in a university and/or nonprofit setting is desirable
- Fluent in oral and written Spanish

An equivalent combination of education and experience from which comparable knowledge and abilities is acquired may be considered.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate excellent leadership, independent judgment and decision-making skills; an aptitude for advocacy in strategic communication supporting policy aims; intellectual achievement; the ability to facilitate collaboration and teamwork both across the communications unit and across the organization; creative and analytical problem-solving, understanding, and experience in media outreach, project management, writing, and editing; the ability to work independently as well as part of a team; a track record of timely completion of projects with strict deadlines; the ability to responsibly manage competing priorities; and a commitment to the ideals of an early childhood education and programs.

How to Apply

Applications are processed through the online job posting at <https://careers.nebraska.edu>. Follow instructions to complete the Standard Application. Along with your application, attach a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three professional references. Direct questions about the position to: humanresources@nebraska.edu. Direct questions about the online application process to: (402) 472-3701.

The University of Nebraska does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment. The University of Nebraska is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status.

ADDENDUM FOR PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Competencies

Nature/Complexity of Work

This position requires an individual who works with considerable independence, energy, initiative, strong work ethic, and sound judgment in a complex day-to-day environment. Strong attention to detail, accuracy, professional discretion, and sensitivity to confidential information, a record of effective teamwork with others, and time management skills are required. Knowledge of the University of Nebraska's organizational structure and interrelationships among the campuses and internal and external constituencies is helpful in this position.

Problem-Solving/Decision-Making

Problem-solving and appropriate decision-making are required in every element of this position. Key duties involve independent judgment regarding analysis of issues and actions required to support day-to-day business transactions. Actions are governed by broad objectives, professional ethics, university procedures, and/or business acumen.

Strategic Input

This individual is required to be proficient and conscientious when representing the Buffett Institute and the university at all times. Administrative review is often necessary before information is released by this position, but the responsibility for error-free detail supporting analytical information rests on the employee.

Know-How

This position demands the ability to take initiative, operate independently, and thrive in a fast-paced and multi-tasking environment. One should demonstrate exceptional interpersonal skills with a strong orientation toward diplomacy, tact, collaboration, and teamwork; exceptional verbal, writing, editing, and proofreading skills; must be detail-oriented and accurate; must have ability to prioritize effectively and quickly respond to shifting priorities; the ability to collect, compile, and analyze facts, draw conclusions and recommend solutions; possess a strong work ethic and willingness to work beyond regular hours, if necessary; and demonstrate a high level of professional discretion and confidentiality. Thorough knowledge of the integrated marketing communications field is necessary. Ability to interpret and prepare information for analysis activities and communicate findings to management is essential. Must follow Board of Regents bylaws and policies and state and federal law and other NU or Institute rules and regulations.

Technical Skills

This position demands technology proficiency, with a willingness to learn and use new technologies relating to (but not limited to) digital communications tools (website/CMS, CRM, Social Media), and project and portfolio management. Proficiency using Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook is also required.

Interactions

This position will be expected to manage projects and work collaboratively across units; advocate new ideas and identify and address obstacles; and construct quality project/work plans with deliverables from minimal definitions. This position will help build and strengthen relationships with the University of Nebraska campuses and must have the ability to work as a member of a team, as well as independently, in a complex environment, and with respect for confidential and sensitive information. This position also interacts with many external constituencies.

Supervision

This position reports to the Director of Communications.

General Information:

Job Family: PR

Job Code: 49343309

Salary Range: PR24

FLSA: Exempt

Position Number: 534
Org. Unit Number: 50008150 (BECl)
Date of Last Update: 11/17/2022 by K Harper

Physical Requirements and Work Conditions

The physical requirements and work conditions described here are representative of what an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Attendance at the workplace is critical. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is routinely required to have vision for up close and far away, talk, hear, sit and use hands to touch, feel, handle, and operate routine office equipment. The employee is occasionally required to stand, walk, climb stairs, bend, reach, twist, and lift, carry, or move up to 15 pounds. The employee is required to occasionally travel to and participate in meetings and conferences that may require the ability to drive a motor vehicle or stay overnight.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate, and there are frequent interruptions as the Institute staff conduct business in cubicles, walled office space, and conference rooms.